

RAN RADIO MECHANICS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER NO. 66 – 30TH APRIL, 2008

John Saywell OAM
President
5 Almond Court
VALE PARK, SA 5081
Tel: (08) 8344 1554
Email: jssaywell@optusnet.com.au

John Bannister
Treasurer
6 Tilley Court
MARION, SA 5043
Tel: (08) 8298 1855
Email: johnban@adam.com.au

George Stevens
(Founder & Vice President)
PO Box 18
BEROWRA HEIGHTS, NSW 2082
Tel: (02) 9456 4007
Email: gws@pacific.net.au

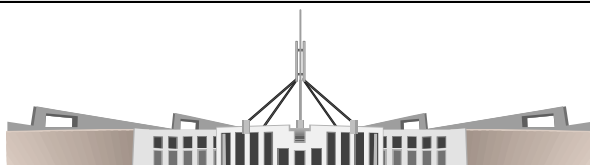
EDITORIAL

In this newsletter you will find:

- An update on our forthcoming 9th National Reunion to be held in Canberra, ACT in October/November, 2008 – getting nearer!
- Attached you will find a copy of an Amended Booking Sheet, as Amended 3.03.2008. It includes the cost of the Buffet Lunch during the CSIRO Discovery Tour. The caterers need to know in advance what numbers they are dealing with.
- Attached you will find an Accommodation Sheet listing the two “Nominated Hotels” with relevant details.
- Further reports on the sad loss of a number of our colleagues.
- News from our various Groups within Australia and Overseas.
- More news on HMAS Sydney (WW2 Cruiser) – now found!
- Other matters of general interest.

For those people intending to be at our forthcoming 9th National Reunion in Canberra and have not as yet submitted their “Booking Sheet” please do so without delay to assist the Reunion Committee in finalising details with the various venues and coach transport company.

We were hoping that the drought was going to break this year and after some flooding rains in some areas things looked promising. However, now a little further down the track matters don't seem so certain. There is still a lack of downpours in the Murray River valley and that river system is now approaching a perilous state. Quite a number of “River Irrigators” and “River Towns” are very worried and rightly so! Please, “send her down Huey!”



OUR 9TH NATIONAL REUNION, 2008

The RAN RADIO MECANICS ASSOCIATION 9TH NATIONAL REUNION is arranged to be held in Canberra from Tuesday, 28th October, 2008 through to Sunday, 2nd November, 2008. A very entertaining and

interesting programme has been planned to ensure that everyone attending will have an enjoyable time.

Attendees select the events they wish to participate in, as it is not a requirement that everyone has to be in every event. So, it is up to the individual as to their maximum and minimum selection of events by marking the “Booking Sheet” accordingly.

The Reunion Programme follows our general well proven formula of:

- Registration followed by a Meet & Greet Evening
- A formal Official Dinner with a Guest Speaker.
- A farewell BBQ.
- A mixture of interesting tours and visits
- Opportunity to sample Canberra's Clubs and night life during evenings.
- Advice of DIY tours and visits
- Advice on accommodation.

A short Opening Address by the Chief Minister, ACT welcoming us to the ACT will be given at the Official Dinner and our Guest Speaker will be a very senior serving Naval Officer from the Weapons Electrical Engineering Branch which embraces the “Radio Mechanics” of today's Navy! More details in the next newsletter. Ron Rowe, our WA Convenor, will be the Master of Ceremonies during the dinner.

When having our Meet and Greet at the Canberra Business Events Centre, the venue management has offered to open a Special Exhibition Room depicting the planning and development of Canberra – some of the displays are interactive. We gladly accepted this offer!

A copy of the 9th National Reunion Programme was included with our previous Newsletter No. 65, datelined 31st January, 2008. If you have lost or mislaid your copy of the Reunion Programme and require a replacement, then, without delay, contact John Saywell:

Tel: 08 8344 1554

Email: jssaywell@optusnet.com.au

As attachments to this Newsletter you will find:

- A copy of a **revised Booking Sheet**, Amended 3.03.08
- An **Accommodation Sheet** listing the two selected Nominated Hotels with the relevant details.

Please note that the Reunion Transport during the Reunion will operate to and from those two hotels, which are The Brassey Hotel and The Forrest Inn.

The booking of accommodation and travel to and from the reunion in Canberra and payment thereof is the sole responsibility of the reunion attendee. We recommend the "Nominated" accommodation; however, you may select whatever accommodation suits you. But, bear in mind the benefits of being co-located with other Reunion Attendees and the fact that the Reunion arranged Coach/Bus transport will only operate to and from the "Nominated" hotels in association with attending the reunion events/functions.

The Reunion Committee reserves its right to cancel, or modify, any or all events/functions/tours/visits if found necessary, for whatever reason. At this stage we do not envisage that action being necessary.

Due to a misunderstanding the Reunion Committee found it necessary to issue a revised Booking Sheet, Amended 3.03.08. There is only one change in the latest issue of the Booking Sheet and that is with respect to the cost of the Buffet Lunch (\$16.00) in the Links Room during the CSIRO Discovery Tour. We, the Editors, believed that the cost of the Buffet Lunch would be paid by the attendees, if they chose to have the meal, while doing the CSIRO Discovery Tour. However, we subsequently learnt that the CSIRO Discovery Tour venue require to know the numbers of our group who will be having the Buffet Lunch, in advance, for catering purposes. This we understand is not unreasonable and so the cost is now included, as a separate item on Wednesday, 29th October, 2008 in the Booking Sheet Amended 3.03.08. John Bannister, our Reunion Treasurer will contact those who have booked for the CSIRO Discovery Tour using the original Booking Sheet.

	REMEMBER
WHERE:	CANBERRA, ACT
WHEN:	TUESDAY, 28 OCTOBER, 2008 to SUNDAY, 2 NOVEMBER, 2008
SUGGESTION:	COMBINE IT WITH A HOLIDAY AND MAKE IT A MOST MEMORABLE TIME!

The 9th National Reunion Committee

Roslyn (Ros) Crawley - Conference Convenor
Jim Little - ACT Convenor
John Bannister - Treasurer

Jim Little will answer questions relating to the Reunion – His contact details are:

Tel: 02 6288 7462

Email: jlittle@actewagl.net.au

The preferred method for questions would be by using Email.

John Bannister, the Treasurer will handle all reunion Receipts, Payments and Refunds. His contact details are:

Address: 6 Tilley Court, Marion, SA 5043

Tel: 08 8298 1855

Email: johnban@adam.com.au

Moir & John Saywell will assist as necessary. Contact details:

Tel: 08 8344 1554

Email: jssaywell@optusnet.com.au

"L & R" MINI REUNION – NOWRA, 2008

During the 60th Anniversary Fleet Air Arm Reunion, to be held in Nowra in October, 2008, there will be a number of "Category" Mini Reunions. The one of particular interest to our members is the "L & R" Mini Reunion.

Bob Luxford and Frank Birtles have combined their efforts to present this event to be held at the Ex-Serviceman's Club, Nowra, at 1700 on Thursday, 23rd October, 2008.

All who intend to be present at this Mini Reunion are requested to contact the organisers (contact details below) to assist with catering for the occasion.

Contact details:

Frank Birtles

Email: frankbirtles@hotmail.com

Telephone: (02) 4421 4723



DONATIONS

Since our last newsletter we have received donations from those named below:-

John Adam, Ken Anderson, Graham Barnett, Dennis Campbell, John Duncan, Bob Flett, Ron Jones, John Macartney, Jim McClure, Norm Morrison, Colwyn Parry and John Rogers.

Thank you everyone for your generosity, it is very much appreciated.

We keep our costs to an absolute minimum with our volunteer organisation bearing personally a measure of the running expenses. For this we are grateful for their dedication and generosity.

ADDRESS CHANGES/CORRECTIONS/ADDITIONS



When advising of your address changes it is of great assistance to us if you also advise of changes to your telephone/fax/mobile telephone/e-mail addresses as well - if not known initially then please let us know as soon as possible. It all helps to make life a little easier! Recent changes/additions of address notified to us are:-

Arty Boyd – has moved from Mount Helena to Stratton in Western Australia.

Phil Sullivan – has moved from Glenunga to Oaklands Park in South Australia.

Please keep us informed of your changes of addresses, and also update us with your telephone numbers, Fax and Email etc. If you note any incorrect details on our mailing labels please inform John Saywell.

MAIL RETURNED/NON DELIVERY

Unfortunately a number of Newsletter mailouts are returned for a number of reasons. Sometimes this is simply because the addressee has overlooked informing us of a change of address. On other occasions it has more ominous overtones—we are always concerned if we are unable to determine the reason behind the return of mail. So, please keep us informed of address changes. We will welcome any help in locating or learning more about the people subject to mail returns.

We have had a number of “mail returns” from Newsletter No. 65 and a Victorian/Tasmanian Group Newsletter mailout.

Dick Covle A “Bailey Boy”, WW2 Specialist Radar Officer, was at Syndal, Vic. from the FND ‘L’ School era, was at Gawler, South Australia.

Trevor Hatchard a Torrens era Radio Mechanic was at Maryknoll, Victoria.

Keith Staindl was at Five Dock, NSW.

John Verran a Torrens era School of Mines & Industries Instructor, was at Port Lincoln, South Australia.

“BOUNCED” EMAILS

We have quite a number of “bounced” Emails during our attempt to send Newsletters via Email addresses – this is particularly disappointing and results in quite an amount of time and effort in an attempt to resolve the problems.

Some of the “bounces” are due to filters in the recipients Email/ISP system; others are due to the receiving Mailbox being “over quota” etc; whereas other “bounces” are simply due to the recipient having changed their address and have not advised us accordingly.

So, please keep us updated on any change of your Email address and help ease our workload. Your attention to this detail will be greatly appreciated by your Editors!



NEW FINDS

We are always pleased to advise of some “New Finds” and we welcome them “back to the fold” and hope they will enjoy the renewed contact with old mates.

Ken Anderson

Our apologies to Ken as we did not include him in an earlier Newsletter! Sorry Ken!

Originally was RANR(NS), O/No. 4943 Rct Seaman in 1955 and completed an RP3 course at HMAS Watson and then joined the RAN (13.06.1955) O/No. R51130 as a Rct (EM) becoming a Ldg REM during his 6 years engagement and serving in various Ships and Shore Establishments. Post RAN worked with IBM, then with AWA in various Aerospace roles and followed by communications and process control with Esso Offshore platforms. Now does volunteer work as a Case Officer at the local Veterans’ Welfare Centre and other Community Volunteer roles! A busy boy!

Adrian (Buzz) Bryant

“Buzz” joined the RAN on 24.10.1958 with O/No. R54840 for an engagement of 12 years; started as a Recruit LB and was assigned to the Radio Electrical Mechanic (Air) category in the days of the FND ‘L’ School era. He was reassigned to General Service in 1963 and became a (C) i.e. “Communications” Rate. A number of title changes and promotions saw “Buzz” as a WOETC after having re-engaged in the RAN. During his service, Buzz was a “Birdie” Radio Mechanic with Squadron and Air Station time and then in General Service he was in a variety of Ships and Shore Establishments, including an almost 3 years stint with ANZUK Singapore. He had Operational Service in Vietnam and Malaysia.

John Owens

Was a PMG Technician-in-training when he joined the RAN 29.09.1958, O/No. R54803 for 9 years in the FND ‘L’ School era. Subsequently signed on for another 3 years. John was promoted through the Electrical Mechanic ratings and became a Chief Electrician Weapons Electrical and when that category was phased out became a Chief POETS. John completed his RAN Service 28.09.1970. During his time he served in a number of Ships and Shore Establishments. One of his ships was the DDG, HMAS Hobart.

Please, any of our readers, if you are able to provide contact addresses, leads, names, preferably with given names/initials of “ex Radio Mechanics” please pass this information on to John Saywell - his contact details can be found at the head and tail of this newsletter. In the end, we will respect anyone’s wish as to whether or not they choose to be involved with us - we simply want to be able to make them aware that ‘we’ exist!



IN MEMORIUM

It is with regret we report the sad passing of a number of our colleagues:

- **Gwen Baldock**, peacefully on 12th February, 2008 in Bayswater, Western Australia. Gwen was the widow of Brian Albert Baldock, a WW2 Hostilities Only Petty Officer Radio Mechanic (W) who had pre-deceased her on 8th July, 2006. Both Gwen and Brian had been active in our Association until health problems prevented that activity.

Gwen was born on 19th September, 1921 in Yarloop, WA – the younger of two daughters to Matilda Kate and Frederick Lionel Auld. Gwen's father died in 1925 as a result of injuries he received in WW1 due to a recoiling field gun – Gwen was not quite 4 years old at the time of her father's decease!

Gwen and Brian met at a local dance in Perth when Gwen was 16 years of age. WW2 arrived and Brian joined the Navy on 1st October, 1942. Five days after Brian was Demobilised, Gwen and Brian married and achieved 60 years of happy matrimony before Brian's decease in 2006. Gwen was very family conscious and was deeply involved in her immediate and extended family. Both Gwen and Brian strove to provide their family with those things which they were unable to have in their own upbringing throughout the Depression Years.

Gwen also busied herself in Community activities and the communities of Bayswater and Kalamunda were impacted by Gwen's enthusiasm to assist. There was not a community activity that Gwen was unwilling to support! She supported the local Marching Girls, the local Mother's Union, Weight Watchers, Kalamunda Lapidary, Meals on Wheels, the Kalamunda Spinners and the Rotary Club of West Perth through which she supported many community projects.

The legacy left to Gwen and Brian's family is – enjoy life every day, challenge what you do not think fair or equitable and love those who are close to you.

Gwen is survived by two daughters, Geraldine and Lesley, two sons, Howard and Stuart; 11 grandchildren, 13 great grandchildren with another two imminent!

- **Edgar Allan (Ted) Baldwin** – 1st January, 2008 in Brisbane. Ted was the third son of Allan and Ruby Baldwin who were dairy farmers; Ted was born at Moregatta, Northern Queensland.

During World War 2, Ted enlisted in the Royal Australian Naval Reserve on 14th August, 1942 and was mobilized for War Service on 17th September, 1942 as an Ordinary Seaman, O/No. B4069 and underwent his "Rookie" Training at Flinders Naval Depot (HMAS Cerberus).

On 19th February, 1943 Ted was selected for Wireless Mechanic technical training and drafted to HMAS Lonsdale at Port Melbourne. The intensive Wireless Mechanic technical training was conducted at the, then, Melbourne Technical College (now Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) – he was a member of RAN 20 Class.

Following his Melbourne Technical training Ted was then given more technical training at the HMAS Cerberus Signal School and at the Belconnen Transmitting Station, Canberra where he was Rated Radio Mechanic (S) and then Leading Radio Mechanic (S) on successive days 23/24 September, 1943.

Then followed a number of drafts to various Shore Establishments and ships. Those drafts were to HMAS Magnetic, Base Station Cairns, HMAS Platypus, USN PG477, HMAS Basilisk (at Port Moresby, Papua), HMAS Moreton, Coonawarra Transmitting Station in the Northern Territory, HMAS Melville and HMAS Rushcutter; some more than once. Ted was demobilized on 22nd February, 1946 then being an Acting Petty Officer Radio Mechanic (S).

Post RAN Ted underwent Teacher Training and then followed a very active career as a Teacher, Unionist and Politician. He became known as "Red Ted" when he took over, as President of the Queensland Teachers Union. Ted was an active member of the ALP from 1952 and became State MLA for the seat of Logan in May, 1969. He returned to teaching when he lost his seat in the landslide against Labor in 1974. He retired in 1984; Ted was awarded a Commonwealth Centenary Medal in 2001 for his services to Education.

Ted is survived by his wife Reeva, sons Ron and Frank, daughter Carole, 10 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. Another son, Eugene, predeceased him.

- **Kenneth William Hayes** – on 16th July, 2007 at age 83 years, in the Seahaven Nursing Home, Inverloch, Victoria. Ken was born in Vacluse, NSW on 8th February, 1924.

Prior to enlisting in the Royal Australian Naval Reserve on 27th November, 1942 he was a University Student; he was mobilized for War Service on 6th January, 1943 as an Ordinary Seaman, O/No. PM5503. During his recruit training

he was selected for Radio Mechanic Technical Training at the Melbourne Technical College and was drafted to HMAS Lonsdale. Ken was assigned to RAN 19 Class but due to illness completed the course in RAN 23 Class.

Further technical training followed at the Signal School, HMAS Cerberus after which he was Rated Radio Mechanic (W) and transferred to the RAN with O/No. 26960 and Rated A/Leading Radio Mechanic the following day, 14th January, 1944. Next, followed Radar Technical Training at the RAN Radio School, South Head, Sydney. At this stage Ken was drafted to HMAS Quiberon, HMS Lanka (in Ceylon), HMAS Lismore, HMAS Leeuwin, HMAS Watson and was Demobilized 15th February, 1946 then being Rated as a Petty Officer Radio Mechanic (W).

Post WW2 Ken returned to the Melbourne University and completed a Degree in Agricultural Science and became a "soldier settler" in 1951. In 1957 he established Farm Management Consultants Pty Ltd. and retained his farm.

His farm had two major enterprises: 1) a Hereford Stud, and 2) a Hydroponic herb production unit.

Ken Hayes was awarded an OAM in 1994, "for services to farm management and land regeneration." Meredith Hayes, Ken's wife, had been awarded an OAM in 1992, "for service to Primary Industry, Conservation and the Environment." Meredith continues to manage the farm with support from their family.

- **Ronald Francis William Howden** – on 18th February, 2008 at age 83 years in Victoria. Ron was born in Southern Cross, Victoria on 30th November, 1924. Ron suffered from Alzheimer's disease prior to his decease, but, we are told, he never forgot his time in the Navy!

Ron was a Fitter and Turner prior to his enlistment into the RAN on 23rd September, 1946 as an Ordinary Seaman Radio Mechanic with O/No. 32585.

Following his Recruit Training at HMAS Cerberus (FND) he was drafted to HMAS Torrens (Port Adelaide) for an intensive technical course at the Adelaide School of Mines and Industries – now part of the University of South Australia where he was a member of RAN 9 Class of Radio Mechanics.

Subsequent drafts were to HMAS Cerberus and HMAS Lonsdale where he was Demobilized on 30th April, 1947.

Post RAN Ron joined the Victorian Police Force and served in that capacity until his retirement to country Victoria.

Ron is survived by his wife Joan and children.

- **Robert Kevin Hudspeth** – known to all as Kevin, on 13th August, 2007, after a long illness, at age 85 years in the Surrey Hills Nursing Home, Victoria. Kevin was born at Richmond, Victoria on 24th January, 1922.

Kevin was an Assistant Clerk of Court when, during WW2, he enlisted in the AMF as a Gunner with Regimental No. V255043, on 26th September, 1941. He was released from the AMF on 26th August, 1942 to enable him to be Mobilized into the Royal Australian Naval Reserve on 27th August, 1942 as an Ordinary Seaman with O/No. PM4865.

Whilst in the Recruit School at HMAS Cerberus (FND) Kevin was selected for Wireless Mechanic technical training at Melbourne Technical College, in RAN 12 Class, and was drafted to HMAS Lonsdale.

Further technical training followed at the FND Signal School and Shore Wireless Station and transferred to the RAN with O/No. 26567. Next was training at the Belconnen Transmitting Station in Canberra before commencing a Radar course at the RAN Radio School, South Head, Sydney. By this time Kevin had been promoted to Acting Leading Radio Mechanic. On completion of his technical training, drafts followed to HMAS Cerberus, Moreton, Magnetic, Basilisk (in Port Moresby, Papua), Lonsdale (some of these more than once) and was finally Demobilized on 27th June, 1946.

Post RAN Kevin returned to the Victoria Justice Department and later became a Magistrate, serving in that capacity for twenty years. He retired in 1982 at age 60 years and enjoyed a lot of time at his holiday home at Sorrento, Victoria where he could see the sea and ships. His ashes have been interred at Sorrento. Kevin is survived by his wife, Dominie, four children, Robert, Nicholas, Lucille and Matthew as well as one grandson and five granddaughters.

- **Michael John Ottey** - on 1st February, 2008 at age 84 years, in Richmond, Tasmania, was born in Lee Green, London on 7th November, 1923.

Known as Mike to everyone, prior to his service in the RAN had served in the Royal Navy as a Hostilities Only Radio Mechanic from 8th September, 1942 until his Demobilisation as a Petty Officer Radio Mechanic (AW) on 25th July, 1946.

When the RAN commenced their post war Fleet Air Arm they recruited some ex RN personnel in the United Kingdom. Mike was recruited in London, allocated O/No. A40308 and joined HMAS Sydney on 2nd February, 1949, the then new Australian Aircraft Carrier, for the trip to Australia. He was Rated REM 1st Class (AIR), LREM (AIR) (PROV) and RE (AIR) (PROV) on successive days and Confirmed as RE (AIR) on 20th April, 1949. On arrival in Australia he was drafted to HMAS Albatross and then back to HMAS Sydney. Mike was Rated CRE (AIR) (with seniority of 1st July, 1951 whilst at HMAS Cerberus). Other drafts followed to HMAS Albatross, Penguin, Kuttubul and was Discharged to Shore Engagement Expired on 19th March, 1955.

We find it of interest to note that Mike's initial Rating recorded for his RN Service was as an Ordinary Telegraphist (WM) – we assume the (WM) equated to (Wireless Mechanic). No such Rating was every used in the RAN.

Following his RAN Service, Mike was Sales Manager with Jacoby Mitchell Pty. Ltd., an instrument company based in Sydney, then in a management position with Datamatic. Next, he was Marketing Manager for Codan Limited in Adelaide, South Australia. Codan is a communications equipment manufacturer supplying a lot of equipment used in the Royal Flying Doctor Service and other niche market equipment.

Mike had an interest in classis cars, at one time owning simultaneously a Jaguar, Mercedes and a Honda. Mike's wife Patricia pre-deceased him some years ago.

- **William John Swan Quinton** – on 23rd April, 2008, at age 80 years, in Canberra, ACT; we do not have details. Bill Quinton was born in Hobart, Tasmania on 3rd November, 1927. He was a Student at the time of enlisting in the RAN on 5th December, 1945 as an Ordinary Seaman with O/No. 28668.

After Recruit Training at HMAS Cerberus Bill qualified as a Radar Plotter 3rd Class whilst at HMAS Watson and was then selected for Radio Mechanic technical training and drafted to HMAS Torrens (Port Adelaide). He was allotted to RAN 6 Class at the School of Mines and Industries to undergo the intensive Radio Mechanics Course. Later he was a member of RAN 7 Class before being reverted to the Seaman Branch, went to sea in HMAS Manoora qualifying in Gunnery and as a Radar Plotter 2nd Class at HMAS Watson.

Bill served in a number of ships and Shore Establishments including the aircraft carriers Sydney, Vengeance and Melbourne as well as

HMAS Barcoo, Cootamundra, Bataan. He was a Leading Seaman when his Engagement Expired on 4th December, 1957.

Bill served in the RANR, O/No. H3483 from 20th May, 1963 until due to ill health his service ended 1st March, 1964.

Post RAN Bill was employed in the Customs Department and later he was in the Hardware Industry.

His funeral service was conducted on 29th April, 2008 with a notice appearing in the Canberra Times, Saturday, 26th April, 2008.

- **Gregory Allan Woodward** – on 6th April, 2008 at age 84 years. Greg, as he was known to all was born in Melbourne, Victoria on 2nd January, 1924.

Greg had a triple bypass operation at the end of February, 2008 and afterwards an infection developed from which he sadly did not survive. During WW2 Greg enlisted in the Royal Australian Naval Reserve on 28th July, 1942 and was mobilized for War Service on 9th September, 1942 as an Ordinary Seaman, O/No. PM4845; Home Port being Port Melbourne.

Greg was selected for Wireless Mechanic technical training at the Melbourne Technical College (MTC), whilst undergoing his Recruit Training at HMAS Cerberus (FND) and was accordingly drafted to HMAS Lonsdale.

On completion of the MTC course it was then back to FND and further technical training at the RAN Signal School on completion of which he was promoted to Wireless Mechanic and then Acting Leading Wireless Mechanic on successive days 17/18 June, 1943 and transferred to the RAN, O/No. 26602.

The next phase of training was at HMAS Rushcutter for the RAN Radio School, South Head, Sydney for an RDF, ie Radar technical course – the word Radar was not at that time in use!

On successful completion of his Radar course, Greg was immediately drafted to the destroyer, HMAS Arunta. To get to HMAS Arunta was almost a saga in itself and involved travel in troop trains from Sydney to Brisbane, to Cairns and then back to Townsville and the troop ship HMV Duntroon! He soon found himself involved in the bombardment of Arawe, the Allied Landings at Cape Gloucester and Saidor!

Then followed a draft to HMAS Norman and convoy duties in the Indian Ocean. Greg was

promoted to Acting Petty Officer Radio Mechanic on 18th June, 1944.

Greg was next drafted to the corvette HMAS Burnie which was then located at Colombo, Ceylon (Sri Lanka these days). Burnie conducted convoy escort duties and minesweeping in the Indian Ocean area and later with the British Pacific Fleet (BPF). He found himself in Japanese waters at the time of the Japanese surrender.

At Demobilization on 2nd September, 1946 Greg had been confirmed as a Petty Officer Radio Mechanic.

Post RAN Greg followed a successful career in the Commonwealth Public Service and was Officer In Charge of the Finance Branch of the Department of Veterans' Affairs in Canberra when he retired.

Greg is survived by his wife Ellen (Peg), four daughters, four sons – with two others having predeceased him, twenty grandchildren and a number of great-grandchildren.

- **Donald George (Don) Wraight** – belatedly, we learn passed away on 23rd May, 2003 after a protracted battle with cancer. Don, as he was known to all was born in Geelong, Victoria on 21st June, 1931 to Irene and George Wraight.

Don joined the RAN on 15th May, 1950 for a period of 6 years and was allocated O/No. R38466 as a Recruit (LB). After he completed his recruit training he was allocated to the Air Branch as a Radio Electrical Mechanic 2nd Class, but, almost immediately was reclassified for General Service.

During his RAN Service Don was in HMAS Cerberus, Albatross, Watson, Shoalhaven, Penguin and Melville spending quite some time at the Coonawarra Transmitting Station in the Northern Territory.

At the time of his Engagement Expired Don had been promoted to Leading Radio Electric Mechanic.

After leaving the Navy, Don, initially, worked in the Radio/Electronics industry in Geelong, Victoria. Next, Don became an Instrument Technician in the Mining industry at the Rum Jungle Uranium Mine in the Northern Territory. Here, Don completed extra studies and became an Instrument Engineer.

It was then off to Hobart and employment with Electrolytic Zinc before more mining activities at Zehan on the Tasmanian West Coast. Don also had employment with Australian Paper Mills in Geevestown, Tasmania.

At this stage it was time for a change of career and so Don and his wife Margaret, bought a hotel in Echuca, Victoria. Then followed a hotel in Caramut and it was there that Don had his first cancer operation.

Whilst serving in the RAN, Don married Margaret on Boxing Day, 26th December, 1953, so, at the time of Don's decease they had almost 50 years of married life together.

Don is survived by his wife, Margaret, four sons, Larry, Ian, Geoffrey and Peter and seven grandchildren (6 boys and 1 girl).

*We extend our deepest sympathy to the families.
Lest we forget!*



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GROUP NEWS

The WA Group held a BBQ meeting at the Swan Yacht Club on Sunday, 9th March, 2008. Sunglasses were required for those looking out on the river under a cloudless sky, cool drink in hand and beautiful ladies by our side.

Thirty-four attendees included:

Arty Boyd & Wendy, who brought Judith visiting from Coventry in the UK, John & Judith Cleary who picked up Norma Devereux, Reg & Margaret Doran with daughter Lee, Don & Barbara Duncan, Jack & Jenny Duperouzel, Brian Evans, Bob & Lynn Flett, Max & Eileen Garth, Kev & Val Gleeson, Allen & Elaine Hoskins, Steve & Margaret Llewellyn, Betty Marshall, Denis & Maree Norriss, Jim & Maree Preston, Vic Rann, Ron & Barbara Rowe and Keith & Doris Taylor. Apologies were received from Lyle O'Meagher, Colin & Bev Benporath, Les & Pauline Fox, Roy & Maureen Jewell, Trevor & Jan Leggo (on another trip overseas) and Bill McAlister.

The good news: Reg Doran turned 84 on Monday 10th March and the young bloke Max Garth turned 78 a few days before the BBQ. Many Happy Returns to you both. It was lovely to see Norma Devereux in such good health having spent five weeks around Christmas in the USA with her family. Also, Squizzy Taylor (aka Keith) is back on deck after having a repair job done on his "Dickie Knee". Says he'll nominate for the AFL draft next season.

The sad news: Ken Hughes has been transferred to Bunbury Hospital but has a long way to go yet. Jim and Maree Preston represented the Association at the funeral service for Gwen Baldock who sadly passed away last month. Fred Varris' wife Yvonne has been very ill with a form of M.S. and has been in Shenton Park Hospital for some time. In spite of it all, Yvonne always has a

cheery word and a smile on her face. They have relocated to Cunderdin where life is a little more layback.

The door prizes were won by Lyn Flett and Brian Evans. Many thanks to Kev Gleeson and Denis Norriss for their culinary skills at the BBQ. The steaks were perfectly cooked, juicy and melted in the mouth – as usual. SYC is the place for great steaks!!!

From a “show of hands”, WA will be well represented at the reunion in Canberra later this year. About 20 fine folk will make the trip east. Bravo Zulu all!!!!

Our next meeting will be Sunday 8 June, 2008 followed by Sunday 28 September and 7 December, 2008. Look forward to seeing you all there.

Ron Rowe



WA BBQ LUNCHEON
Sunday, 8th June, 2008
1130 for 1200 -1430
SWAN YACHT CLUB – EAST
FREMANTLE
USUAL FARE

REMEMBER TO WEAR YOUR NAME TAG
RSVP

Vic Rann – Tel: 08 9354 5529 or email
vicandgwen@optusnet.com.au
Or

Ron Rowe – Tel: 08 9295 0851 or email
rower65@bigpond.net.au



SA/NT GROUP NEWS

The next SA/NT Group Luncheon is scheduled for Sunday, 15th June, 2008 with the venue, once again, being the very popular Hampstead Hotel.

Assemble at 11.30am for lunch at noon. For those unfamiliar with the Hampstead Hotel, you will find it located at the junction of North East Road and Hampstead Road. There is plenty of off-street parking, the main entrance to the Lounge Bar and Restaurant is located at the rear car park.

Bookings are essential and it would greatly assist your organisers if you would please telephone:

Kevin Bonney (08) 8337 3051
Ken Bryant (08) 8265 4909
John Saywell (08) 8344 1554

We look forward to seeing you there – make it a maximum attendance day!

Our thoughts and wishes are also sent to those who are not enjoying the best of health at this time.



QUEENSLAND GROUP NEWS

Since the last newsletter things have been quiet for some of us here in Queensland, while others have been busy keeping medical staff in our hospitals rather busy.

George Telfer, who has been very sick, returned to hospital for a period of about ten days in order to treat intravenously a lung infection.

Mac Macartney was discharged from Greenslopes Hospital some weeks ago where he had a large abdominal operation. He is now back on his feet and recovering well, thanks to his wonderful wife Sue who has been caring for him. Welcome to the ‘zipper’ club Mac!

On Anzac Day in Brisbane there was a large roll-up of members who marched with their respective Associations. Royal Australian Navy Helicopter Flight Vietnam was well represented, and this year Adrian Whiteman organised a reunion for their members. Our Association members who marched were: Kevin Koschel, Frank Lloyd, John (Mac) Macartney, Brendon (Buck) Ryan and Adrian Whiteman. It was great to meet up with them; some I had not seen for many years. John Mac travelled from his home in Central Queensland and Buck Ryan from Porepunkah, Victoria. Both were in good spirits after recent operations and wheelchairs were on standby for them during the march.

The Fleet Air Arm was well represented by David Adams, Lindsay (Pinky) Brown, Ron Hobba and Ron Melville (who had travelled from Tasmania); stopped off in Brisbane to attend the March en-route to visit family in Darwin. Great to see you Ron! Also marching with the FAA were two prospective members, (I hope), who were both Air Electrical – Jim Hammond and David Hanlon.

On completion of the March, RANHFV and FAA joined for lunch in the “Anzac” Beer Garden of the Spring Hill Hotel which we had all to ourselves. A great day was enjoyed by all.

Regards to all and stay healthy!

Ron Hobba

Contacts:

Convenor: Ron Hobba

7 Bloomfield Place, Carina, Qld 4152

Tel. No. (07) 3843 2207

Email: ronandfred@bigpond.com

Deputy Convenor: John Macartney

PO Box 689, Childers, Qld. 4660

Tel. No. (07) 4126 3445

Email: jrmaca@bigpond.com



NEW SOUTH WALES GROUP NEWS

George Stevens continues to recover from his recent illness and has now completed extensive tests to resolve his correct diagnosis and treatment. As a consequence of the above two factors other activities in NSW Group have taken a "back seat".

We have pleaded in the past for volunteers in NSW to step forward to assume the role of Group Convenor and Deputy Convenor, but, to date, not one volunteer! Please, "We Need You Now!", even more than ever. So, please volunteer to keep us on a steady course!

Contacts: George or Shirley Stevens:

Tel. No: (02) 9456 4007 email: gws@pacific.net.au

VICTORIA/TASMANIA GROUP NEWS

Our luncheon was held on 6th February, 2008 at the Dandenong RSL. This was a most enjoyable get-together with fourteen members attending.



Bruce & Sally Altson, Dennis & Nancy Campbell, Mick & Phyl George, Val Poppins, Ken Pryor, Ted Ramus, Ian Shackleton, Lofty & Sue Watson and Lorraine & John Laughton.

Apologies were received from:

Margaret Bail, Peter & Millie Barnes, Walter Bennett, Jack & Winsome Cations, Helen Charlton, Dick & Ruth Coyle, Grace Davies, Rina Donald, Trevor Eastman, Ailsa Holman, David Innes, Jack Kealy, Jim Lane, Margaret Mangan, Ray & Shirley Martin, Ron Melville (Tas), Kevin & Rina Mills, Dean Penglase, Maurie & Valerie Pritchard, Marie Pryor, Kevin Roper and Clyde & Shirley Scaife.

The proposed dates for meetings in 2008 are: **28th May, 20th August and 19th November. Please put these dates in your diary and come and join us for a great lunch.**

Regards,

John Laughton



Our next luncheon will be held on Wednesday, 28th May, 2008, at the Dandenong RSL Club at 11.30am for a meeting prior to lunch.

Please advise your attendance to the contacts below.

Contacts:

John Laughton, 36 Tamarisk Road, Narre Warren, Vic. 3805. Tel. No. (03) 9704 7799; Mob. No. 0417 336 423; Email: johnfl@aapt.net.au or

Ian Shackleton, 254 Lawrence Rd, Mt. Waverley, Vic. 3149. Tel. No. (03) 9802 7694

Mick George, 10 Bruce Street, Laverton, Vic. 3028 Tel. No. 03 9369 5805; Mob No. 0401 583 319

Email: rickgeorge@optusnet.com.au

ACT GROUP NEWS

The main preoccupation of the ACT Group has been the continuation of planning and organising the 9th National Reunion of the RAN Radio Mechanics Association to occur in Canberra from 28th October, 2008 to 2nd November, 2008.

You are encouraged to participate in this reunion which will be entertaining and enjoyable. Ros Crawley is greatly thanked for her energy and knowledge of the Canberra Convention/Conference & tourism scene. Ros has contributed significantly in the assembly of the Reunion Programme! Jim Little has also played a role during the planning period and will now be the focal point for questions relating to the forthcoming reunion.

Contact:

Convenor: Jim Little, Tel. No. (02) 6288 7462

Email: jlittle@actewagl.net.au



USA/CANADA GROUP NEWS

There was a get together held in Cyacus, California during April, however we still await details.

Contact: Les Figg, 583 Valeri Ruth Court,

Santa Clare, California, USA 95050

Email: les_figg@comcast.net or

lfigg@alacritech.com



UK GROUP NEWS

Not a lot to report except that Tommy Joyce has at last realised that the abacus is only a museum piece in 21st century Britain! That is to say that he now has a PC and when he discovers where the rows of beads are he will probably contact directly.

Reg and Nicky Thacker are working on the 2009 Reunion which will be in Leicestershire and we are hoping that we may have discovered another of our group living in Oz. We are waiting to hear from him at the moment but he seems to be taking his time!

Meanwhile having heard nothing to the contrary, all seems well in the Pommie camp.

Regards,

Ted Strauss

Contact: Tommy Joyce, 16 Foxton Avenue, Gosforth, Newcastle-on-Tyne, U.K. NE32AR

Telephone No. in the UK: 01912 843512

Tommy Joyce may also be contacted via **Ted Strauss**

Telephone No. in the UK: 01453 542566

Email Address: ted_strauss@btinternet.com



THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE

A meeting was held on the 12th March, 2008 with the main subject being the 9th National Reunion to be held in Canberra in October, 2008.

The next meeting is scheduled for 18th June, 2008.



SICK BAY

We are aware that a number of our colleagues “out there” have not been in the best of health with some having a spell in hospital for treatment and serious operations.

The resilience and determination to recover by these people is inspiring! Buck Ryan, from Victoria, set new records in recovering from major surgery and astounded his medics with setting his own goals that they believed were unattainable by him. One of those goals was to march with his RAN Helicopter Flight Vietnam mates in the 2008 Anzac Day march in Brisbane – he achieved that goal with flying colours! Well done Buck and so eyes down now for achieving his other goals!

Others who have not been faring well, but also full of determination to overcome their medical problems are George Telfer, John Macartney, Don Crowley and Graham (Barney) Barnett.

We wish all our colleagues who are on the “Sick List” a quick and full recovery; we are all thinking of you!

SOUTH AUSTRALIA’S MINISTER FOR VETERANS’ AFFAIRS

South Australian veterans now have their own State Minister for Veterans’ Affairs. Michael Atkinson who is the SA Attorney General has been appointed and sworn in as the first SA Minister for Veterans’ Affairs during April, 2008. He will be assisted by Lieutenant Colonel (R’td) Bill Denny who becomes the Minister’s Chief Adviser.

The appointment ensures that SA veterans will have a focal point to raise any issues or concerns with the State Government and will provide assistance to make it easier for veterans to access all State services.

END OF MYSTERY – HMAS SYDNEY FOUND!

HMAS Sydney, the WW2 light cruiser was finally located 66 years after her ill-fated action with HSK Kormoran which also sank following the action.

The location of the two wrecks was a stunning achievement, successfully completed in a relatively short time span. No doubt the success of the mission was considerably enhanced by painstaking research ahead of the search. David Mearns, the Search Director of The Finding Sydney Foundation, extensively searched records in the United Kingdom, Germany and Australia and also interviewed survivors of HSK Kormoran still living in Germany prior to the commencement of the search off the Western Australian Coast.

A dictionary that had belonged to the Captain of HSK Kormoran was found among records held in the United Kingdom. In that dictionary Captain Dietmers had recorded coded messages providing details of the action between HMAS Sydney and HSK Kormoran.

David Mearns decided that his best chance of finding HMAS Sydney was first to locate HSK Kormoran, for which he at least had what was hopefully good information based on WW2 interrogations of Kormoran’s crew and Captain Dietmers’s coded details.

- HSK Kormoran was located in 64 hours of active searching and then followed a total of three high resolution side-scan sonar passes over the wreck of HKS Kormoran to confirm its identity.
- HMAS Sydney was located in 67 hours of active searching and then followed a total of four high resolution side-scan sonar passes over the wreck of HMAS Sydney to confirm its identity.
- Both wrecks and their associated debris fields were filmed in high quality video totaling approximately 60 hours and an additional 1,435 still photographs were taken.
- Commemorations were held at sea over both wreck sites.
- Both wreck sites are now legally protected under the Historic Shipwreck Act of 1976.
- A Commission of Inquiry led by Terence Cole QC will be conducted to inquire into the circumstances of the loss of HMAS Sydney.
- A documentary of the search expedition was broadcast on ABC TV on 15th April, 2008.
- 900 families related to men lost in the sinking of HMAS Sydney have registered with the RAN’s Relative Helpline and registered their details.

Although we highlighted, above, the relative short time expended in the actual sea search to locate the two wrecks there had been an enormous amount of work and commitment over a period of five years!

Dr. Michael (Mac) McCarthy, curator of Maritime Archaeology, WA Museum who was an Observer on board SV Geosounder for the 43 days of the search stated, “For many this successful search is finality. For some it is but a continuation. For others it is only the beginning, for an independent inquiry has been

announced. In these last cases let us hope that the lessons learnt to date will lead to exhaustive archival search, objective research, debate and well-reasoned analyses and conclusion on all fronts and at all levels. Above all let us hope that the sacrifice of those who we know so desperately died in service on HMAS Sydney is honoured. This crew died trying to make our nation a place where diversity of opinion could thrive, where respect to others would be shown and where all were to be given that fair go."

BELCONNEN ROO CULL

As you all know, the Naval Transmitting Station, 'BELS' in Canberra ceased operations years ago, had its three 600 foot masts demolished last year, but, yet it is still the source of worldwide communications! Why? Because there has been prolific breeding of kangaroos on the site and their excessive grazing habits are threatening some other rarer species.

The authorities have announced (and decided to proceed) that 400 kangaroos are to be culled. Some people have become hopping mad at that proposal; the Japanese nation has been throwing the story back in Australia's face as a counter to Australia's opposition to Japanese whaling! Prominent worldwide citizens have protested angrily and took up the cause.



Corby Williams has regularly updated us on the Roo Culling Saga which has taken on a life of its own!

Belconnen radiates still!

There were discussions held to see if the kangaroos could be migrated to NSW but this isn't going to happen for a number of complex reasons. The saga has taken up time in the Federal and ACT Parliaments, featured in National and International Press and TV news.

We learn that the Australian Army has now been assigned the job of culling the kangaroos in a humane manner. However, we await further developments as it is likely to abound in further reactions.

One wonders if all the sheep that used to graze on Belconnen in earlier years had any respect for those rare species now being so ardently protected? Perhaps the sheep were BAAed from eating those!



BOOKS OF INTEREST

George Stevens recently read Ian Pfennigworth's last book, titled "Tiger Territory – The Untold Story of the Royal Australian Navy in South East Asia from 1948 to 1971".

George says he gives it full marks for two reasons. Firstly, the huge amount of research that Ian Pfennigworth has done adds credence to his observations and the conclusions he draws. Secondly, is the open, highly critical, caustic comments Ian Pfennigworth makes about high ranking individuals and organisations for the lack of recognition given to sea going RAN members for their contribution to peace in South East Asia.

Chapter 7 of the book, titled, "The Veterans' Struggle for Recognition", details the failures of Federal Governments, senior Naval Officers, DVA and official historians to understand the issues affecting ships' companies assigned for FESR duties. Ian Pfennigworth pulls no punches in his text, using words and phrases such as, "Guilty of relying on inaccurate information", "wishy-washy comments", "sloppy research", "this rolling mess", "the Navy took refuge in obfuscation", "poor record keeping", "Some of this unconscionable reluctance to accept the facts was because of the inadequacy of records, in other cases it was due to simple bureaucratic bloody-mindedness".

An extract of the final chapter of the book's Chapter 7 states, "- over 5,000 veterans of the FESR with more than 17,000 accepted injuries had to wait until 2001 to gain access to their entitlements that should have been theirs in the 1950s. The other terrifying statistic is that the FESR Association estimated that only 7,000 navy personnel served in the theatre; that's a casualty rate of over 70%".

The author is ex Captain RAN, Dr. Ian Pfennigworth. George Stevens' summarises by saying, the vast amount of research which led to this publication is impressive, helping the reader understand the many and complex issues affecting Australia's evolving role in S.E. Asian defence and the RAN's protracted, often destructive, severance from the Royal Navy umbilical cord. It also adds considerable weight to the author's assertion that the RAN's sea going ships' companies assigned for operational duties in South East Asia were very shabbily treated for almost 50 years in relation to various expatriation entitlements, an unsatisfactory situation that persisted until 2001!

A number of our RAN Radio Mechanic Association members contributed information for this book in one way or another. If you were part of a ships' company in any of the RAN's fleet – aircraft carrier, destroyer, frigate, mine-countermeasures vessels, in all some 22 ships, or, a member of the Fleet Air Arm serving aboard HMA Ships Sydney or Melbourne aircraft carriers during this period 1948 to 1971, this book will be of real interest to you.

Copies may be purchased through the publisher:

Rosenberg Publishing,

PO Box 6125,

Dural Delivery Centre, NSW 2158.

Telephone No: (02) 9654 1338.

CAN YOU HELP?

Recently we sighted an Ordinary Telegraphist's right arm Rate Badge with the letter 'D' underneath. Does anyone know what the 'D' signifies? During World War 2 a 'C' under an Ordinary Telegraphist's Badge denoted the Rating of Coder. Earlier still an 'R' was used under the Ordinary Telegraphist's Badge to signify the Rating of an RDF Operator/Mechanic in the Royal Navy – or at least this is our understanding.



NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES

We would appreciate learning of your Email address and any subsequent changes. Our current Email listing contains 310 addresses, whereas our Mailout List currently contains 617 addresses. So, please advise John Saywell of your current Email address/update.

John's contact details are shown at the newsletter header and in the organisation contact details at the end of this newsletter.

MORE WEB SITES

- Did you know you can take a virtual tour and see some of the highlights of the **Australian War Memorial** in Canberra?

www.awm.gov.au/virtualtour

Take a look at the Commemorative Area, the Aircraft Hall, the Anzac Hall and more!

- The **Navy** provides you with the opportunity to wander through warships, submarines and helicopters with their virtual tour of a virtual fleet at:

www.navy.gov.au/vf

You are able to select from a range of frigates, destroyers, submarines and more, read about them and then take a tour.

- The **National Museum of Australia** virtual tour will provide you with a good understanding of what you can see in this museum when you visit:

www.nma.gov.au/visit/virtual_tour

See the Garden of Australian Dreams, the Braille Wall, the massive Main Hall, Circa (the rotating theatre space), various exhibitions and more.



YOUR HEALTH

ASPIRIN – A NIGHT 'CURE'

Recent studies have shown that a small dose of aspirin may cut the risk of heart attack or stroke in those with rising blood pressure, but, only if it is taken at night.

Aspirin can lower blood pressure to normal for up to 24 hours if the tablet is taken at night, according to Spanish researchers.

It is hoped that a preventative 75mg dose – one fifth of the amount found in a standard aspirin tablet – could

prevent many people with normal to high blood pressure having to take expensive medication. Consult your Doctor!

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Australian scientists believe they are a step closer to curing Alzheimer's disease. Data from a clinical trial of a new drug shows the medication can reduce levels of a brain protein called amyloid, which is linked to the condition. Melbourne researchers have developed a drug that has been found to stop the process in rats and a small group of sufferers.

THE NATIONAL ORGANISATION

PRESIDENT:

John Saywell OAM (08) 8344 1554
Email: jssaywell@optusnet.com.au

VICE PRESIDENT:

George Stevens (02) 9456 4007
Email: gws@pacific.net.au

TREASURER:

John Bannister (08) 8298 1855
Email: johnban@adam.com.au

SECRETARY:

Moira Saywell

NEWSLETTER EDITORS:

Moira & John Saywell As above

CONVENORS & DEPUTIES:

Old: **Ron Hobba** (07) 3843 2207
Email: ronandfred@bigpond.com
Deputy: **John Macartney** (07) 4126 3445
Email: jrmaca@bigpond.com

NSW: **George Stevens** (02) 9456 4007
Email: gws@pacific.net.au
Deputy: **Vacant**

Vic/Tas: **John Laughton** (03) 9704 7799
Email: johnfl@aapt.net.au
Deputies: **Ian Shackleton** (03) 9802 7694
Mick George (03) 9369 5605
Email: rickgeorge@optusnet.com.au

A.C.T. **Jim Little** (02) 6288 7462
Email: jlittle@actewagl.net.au
Deputy: **Vacant**

Sth Aust./N.T.

Kevin Bonney (08) 8337 3051
Deputies: **Ken Bryant** (08) 8265 4909
Michael Cain (08) 8536 4243
Email: mrcain@adam.com.au

WA

Ron Rowe (08) 9295 0851
Email: rower65@bigpond.net.au
Deputy: **Vic Rann** (08) 9354 5529
Email: vicandgwen@optusnet.com.au

U.K.

Tommy Joyce UK 01912 843512
Deputy: **Ted Strauss** UK 01453 542566
Email: ted_strauss@btinternet.com

USA/Canada

Les Figg
Email: les_figg@comcast.net